Amoy China July 30th 1845

To the
Committee on Foreign Missions
Soc. of Inq. Theo. Sem. Princeton N.J.

Very dear Brethren

When about to sail from U.S. I received from Dr. Wescott, then the Secretary of your Committee, a note requesting a correspondence. Aside from the gratification of hearing occasionally from the Seminary, it is with pleasure that I concede to the request that if possible I may be the means of stirring up in the bosoms of some of the Brethren a longing desire to come forth to the multitudes of this great empire. At this early stage of my acquaintance with the people & their language it would not be proper to attempt a particular account of any of their superstitious or idolatrous practices ~~of the people~~ excepting what may lie on the surface of society open to every day observation. This is a commercial place of some importance, having the foreign trade for a populous district bordering on the bay, yet the mass of the people are poor, & very many are unable to read. In point of size, wealth, & intelligence Amoy, so far as we can learn, is much inferior to other cities of the neighborhood. Before noticing the particulars of

operations at this station I may with profit notice the circumstances of the whole field. There are now Missionaries at the following points, Hong-Kong - Macao, Canton, Amoy, Chusan, Ningpo, & Shanghae. At Hongkong there are yet Messrs Brown & Bonney, the attention of whom is devoted to the Morrison Ed. Soc.'s School. & Dr Ball of Am. Bd, & Dr. Legge, of the London Soc. with their families. - Mrs. Legge & Miss Ball teach, & Drs. Ball & Legge, preach to the Chinese, distribute tracts, &c. as they have strength & opportunity. Mr. Brown also preaches occasionally in Chinese at the Chapel in Victoria. Since the decree of toleration, which you have read in the papers, Hongkong has lost much of its importance as a mission station. Part of the London Soc.'s force has since removed to Canton, the whole Baptist establishment had removed a few days before, & that of the Am. Board has partly followed, & will entirely by the end of the summer. Mr. Gutzlaff is in Hong-kong. I saw in a New York or Philada. paper of Feb. that he had become a "Police Officer at Hongkong." He has become an Officer under government, "Chinese Secretary", i.e. translator, but not a "police Officer" - properly. He still labors in his own way, & entirely alone, baptizing &c. but no one knows the particulars of his movements, nor have the Missionaries any confidence in the efficiency for good of what he does in this way. - He is a laborious, eccentric man,

hard to be understood.-
At Macao, as you are aware Mr. Happer has his lately established School, of which he speaks favorably. I suppose you will learn more respecting it from the "Chronicle" than I can give you at least within the limits of this letter. Mr. James Bridgman is now in Macao, recruiting health, & studying the language. I believe there is no direct Missionary work carried on there for the Chinese residents.-
At Canton are, Messrs. Roberts, Shuck, & Devan with Mrs. Devan, of the Baptist Church.- Mr. Roberts has for several years been laboring alone in the city, accomplishing, it is thought, much good. Several Chapels were to be opened immediately on the removal of the Mission to the city, but we have recently heard that they have now but One, there being a great unwillingness to rent on the part of the people.- Mr. Shuck has more Church members, than belong to all other denominations in China.- We hope for the best, but have reason to fear for the great part of them. When the greatest care has been taken many have disappointed the hopes entertained of them, & Mr. S. has not been careful, in the estimation of those best acquainted with the method of receiving his communicants.
Of the London Society there are Mr. Gillespie & Mrs. Marshall.- The former has not yet been a year in the field I believe.- Mrs. Marshall

is perhaps yet in Hongkong; She engages in teaching. Of the Am. Board Drs Parker & Bridgman & wives are now in Canton, & Dr. Ball & family, as before. States are to remove thither. Dr. Parker will probably in future devote himself more to direct missionary labor, - preaching &c. - Mr. Gillespie lately had his Chapel broken open by a mob, & the furniture destroyed. This is apparently the most undesirable place of labor of the five ports. On account of the low prevalence of foreign commercial influences, almost unmingled with Christian ~~influence~~ influence. -

At Amoy there are of the London Soc. Messrs Young & Stronach & their wives - Of the Am. Board Messrs Doty & Pohlman, & wives, - Private support Dr. Cumming - Presb. Board - Lloyd & Brown. - At Foo-chow, there are as yet no Missionaries, nor do we know of any about to go there. This is a very large city, & the country around said to possess many attractions superior to most of the other places accessible.

Chusan is still occupied by the English. No doubt the Eng. Gov. would gladly hold on to it, but I cannot see any way for them to do so. - Any Eng. Officer told us a few days since, that it would be evacuated next January, the last payment by the Chinese Gov. being due in Dec.

At present Mr. Loomis & lady are there. It seems very desirable to have a station at

stations; sub-dialects of the Hok-kien, are now able to speak with readiness, some of them fluently & correctly. In the Mandarin, it seems not absolutely essential to regard the tones in order to be understood, though in proportion as they are neglected, the speaker must have an awkward & unpleasant utterance. The Mandarin has but four tones. But the Colloquials of this province have eight tones, & it is as important to get the right tone as the right orthography. This adds no little to the difficulty of acquiring this dialect; yet, except of memory, with an ordinary ear, & ordinary vocal organs, there does not appear to be any great obstacle. The sounds are not difficult, & patient attention enables one at length to distinguish the nice variations of tone, & to make them.

There are now three preaching places open where regular services are held twice on the Sabbath, & to which at various times during the week, those able to talk, can resort. The audiences vary from 20 to 75 or 100. - Of whom a few are regular hearers always in their places, - Among these are two old men, one of whom has for some time given evidences of piety, though circumstances have hindered his admission to the

church, & the other has within a few days manifested unusual concern. On Monday of this week he came, with earnestness inquiring "what shall I do?" And yesterday he returned with an old man, an intimate friend, & gave some reason to hope that he had indeed accepted of Christ. He brought his friend that he might be instructed in the same truths. There is a young man here, a rope maker on our Street, but of some intelligence, who attends to all the duties of our religion so far as outward observance is concerned, public & private, but there is not yet satisfactory evidence of a change of heart. The old man say there are many, who profess themselves convinced of the folly of idolatry, & of earthly things, & are with some anxiety, seeking by lives of uprightness, to prepare themselves for death. These are not great things in themselves, but after three years & six months of drought we may take encouragement from the appearance of the little cloud, as a man's hand, to hope that soon the heavens will be covered & there will be "a very great rain."

My residence here has been only during the present warm season, ~~during~~ when ~~which~~ out-door labors cannot be carried on so vigorously. The Brethren however go out frequently through the city to preach & distribute books, as they have

opportunity, in the streets or temples. There is no difficulty in getting small audiences at any point. & uniformly the kindest treatment is met with— Some will defend their gods, but usually a ready assent is given to the truth of statements made concerning the folly of their own worship. It is far more difficult to convince them of the truth of our own system.

Here the three great religions of the Empire, Confucianism, Taoism, & Buddhism seem thoroughly blended, & confounded. The rankest Atheism & all grades of infidelity, down to most abject superstition and devotion to the gods, are found.— On account of an Epidemic which within perhaps six months has carried off, we are told, about 10.000 people, but which has now subsided, we have witnessed an unusual display of processions, theatrical performances, etc. first for the purpose of relief, & then in the way of thanksgiving & rejoicing.—

As yet no church has been organized— We commune from month to month alone, a few of God's people, separated from ungodly nominal Christians, & in one corner of a great heathen city. We do trust this will not be the case long.— Confidently looking for this favorable change in the face of things those who can labor directly to benefit the multitudes labor

ofs without fainting.

You will probably see before the arrival of this, notice of the failure of Mrs. Hepburn's health, requiring the abandonment of this station if not a return home. Mrs. H. did not lose her health here, since you are aware, a weak constitution was brought from Singapore. There is not at Amoy, however, that bracing influence which only a higher latitude can furnish, or that opportunity for exercise, which is necessary to reinvigorate a reduced frame. The loss of Dr. & Mrs. H. will be much felt by the Mission. The Doctor was becoming quite familiar with the language & both we esteemed as pleasant and devoted Missionaries. The former part of last warm season the Mission families were on Kau-long-su - which, then & this summer, has proved very unhealthy. Now all the families are on the city side of the harbor, in dry & airy rooms, on the second story of houses on the water, & fully exposed to the Sea-breeze. This summer more or less of bilious symptoms have been felt by some of them, but nothing serious, & others have almost entirely escaped, - one or two entirely. Though the sickly season has not passed we feel now a strong hope that a site has been found where pretty good general health may reasonably be expected. -

You have been made aware of the undertaking, now in progress, of making a thorough revision of the translations heretofore prepared of the S. Scriptures. This is carried on upon the plan adopted by the translators of our own Version. A full account of the proceedings in the case may have been published in some of your papers or periodicals. — I have read them only in the Report of the B. & F. Bib. Society of last year. — The New Test. is now distributed among the several stations, & the work is progressing. It may be two or three years before the whole will be ready for the press. — In this work the Brethren here capable — viz. Stronach, Young, Pohlman, & Doty spend 6 hours every day.

I have said that Foo-chow, or Hok-chew, remains unoccupied. When Dr. Hepburn was compelled to leave us, Lloyd & myself, being new comers, not having yet devoted much time to this dialect, it was thought by us a favorable opportunity for proceeding thither & taking possession. We proposed it to the other brethren South & North. As yet we have not heard from all, & of those heard from, some are favorable others adverse; the matter therefore remains in doubt. — For the present we are pleas-

antly situated, & if it should be decided that it is best to retain this station, we shall feel content.- Here is a wide field,

I have now, Brethren, given you, briefly a tolerably complete view of the whole field. Perhaps I should have said a word about Roman Missionaries.- There are some in this province.- One at Chiang-chew, I believe,- one or more at Aok-chew, & we hear rumors of one being in this city. If he is here he is either doing little, or what he does is of little use. I have heard since being in China of one of their priests being accosted by some one at Shanghai, perhaps by Mr. Medhurst. He was questioned about their employment- if they preached? No! they had not time.- were they distributing books? No!- had not time for that.- preparing books?- No!- had not time.- What then was their occupation? Their time was fully occupied in visiting the sick.- Some such labor may be that of the Romish priest of Amoy.

What I have written is intended to "stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance"- -that you may call fully to mind the command of our Lord Jesus Christ.- I hasten to enter a most abundant door of access to so many millions of people-

We have heard with joy that the American

Board has formed the purpose of sending out a score within the next two years. This will not be an adequate supply - Shall not some of those to leave the Seminary next May come & join us! - And if this field by any possibility should be full, there is India, where our Brethren are fainting under the weight of their labors. But of India I need not speak, since from some of those on the ground you will have perhaps before this can reach you, a full statement of the necessities which they feel of a reinforcement.

May now the grace of God rest upon you richly. May the session soon to commence be marked by new zeal in all your meetings - & a higher purpose of consecration to God.

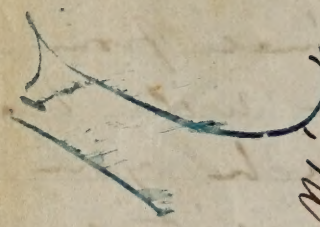
Our Communion season is on the first Sabbath of each Month - for us then, & for our personal sanctification, I sincerely ask your fervent prayers. We need not want greater than that of undivided devotion to our Master's work, in the inward feeling, the spirit of our minds. -

Mr Lloyd unites with me in the warmest Christian salutations to all the Brethren

Yours in the Gospel

Hugh A. Brown

N.B. – In the statement of the number of Missionaries Dr. Hobson is omitted of the London Society – who has been keeping a hospital at Hong-Kong. – He has, however, just left for Eng. for his wife's health, – Expecting to be back in 18 months. –



Rec. March 1846

4 Sheets

Rev. Wm. Cor. Secretary
of Com. on For. Missions
Theo. Seminary
Princeton N.J.
U. S. A.